Customize appearance

Eminem Lionizes Hailie, Kisses Off Debbie, Invites You To Square Dance

Rapper gets his daughter on the mic, addresses his detractors, including his mom.

By MTV News Staff
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Marshall "Eminem" Mathers may liken himself and his daughter Hailie Jade to Bonnie and Clyde, but on the *The Eminem Show,* they'll remind you more of Master P and Lil' Romeo.

"I swear to you she was so natural at it," Eminem said of Hailie's appearance on the track "My Dad's Gone Crazy." "I would tell her something one time and she would do it. She would do all the little sound effects and whatever. And she's geeked to be on the song."

Shady said that many times when he makes music in one of his two studios he brings his 6-year-old with him, and she bides her time by playing video games while he spits his rancor in the vocal booth. And it looks like she's picked up more than just her dad's love of music from these visits to the studio.

"That's my little girl so she just goofy too," Marshall marveled. "She just runs around saying things. One day we was in the studio doing a song and she was like, 'Somebody please help me, I think my dad's gone crazy.' I was like, 'Hailie, what did you say?' She said it again and she was like, 'Daddy I wanna say it on the mic.' "

Em said he doesn't let Hailie get on the mic every time she wants to, but with Dr. Dre coming to town the next day to work on a track, he thought it was an opportune time to let his child sing of his dementia.

"Mind you that the song has cussin' on it and whatever people think about it, she's gonna grow up in her life and hear worse," he affirmed. "So at least when she gets older she can grow up and say, 'My dad put me on a song. My dad sang songs about me, my dad put my name everywhere.' "

Shady is cognizant, however, that some of the lyrics in "My Dad's Gone Crazy" aren't necessarily suitable for young ears.

"I have a clean version that I made that I play for her," he said. "There's a couple cuss words that can slip by, and that's cool with me as long as she knows not to repeat them. I'm not gonna front, some of my songs got a lot of a little bit too much for a 6-year-old."

And while Marshall and Hailie's duet brings father and daughter closer together, *The Eminem Show*'s "Cleaning Out My Closet" centers on familial estrangement. In the chorus, Eminem sings about having remorse for any pain he may have caused his mother, Debbie Mathers, then goes on to relive the events that led to their relationship crumbling.

"I'm closing it off like, 'This is how I feel and I can't tell you the day that I'm gonna stop feeling like this 'cause I don't know,' " he said about the song. "Maybe one day before one of us reaches our graves we can make some type of amends, but as of right now, she tried to take — whether she realized it or not — everything I was working for. Everything I worked so hard for by myself to get, to make a better way for me and my family at the time. And now she tried to take food out of the mouth of my little girl. That's her granddaughter.

"Her bridge is burnt with me," he continued. "Every time she put her face in the press, every time she did something to put her face out there and try to speak on the past and say things that weren't true, I'm not gonna lie — it hurt me. 'Cleaning Out My Closet' is kind of my way of saying, 'Alright, I'm done with it.' "

Em knows he will never be finished with having to defend himself against his critics. "Sing for the Moment," which samples Aerosmith's "Dream On," finds the MC venting his frustration at people who wrongly judge him and his peers.

"Basically that was the first song I wrote for this album and it touches on a lot of different things, what I was going through at the time with court cases," he recalled. "I didn't know what was gonna happen. So it just touches on everything, basically it's just saying why we sing, why we rap and what is our purpose of doing it. A lot of people have perceptions of entertainers, especially in hip-hop. They think we just tote guns and drink and smoke, and that's all we do. At the end of the day I wanted to justify ... if we do it, why we do it."

Em also lashes back at his naysayers on "White America." He insists they shouldn't be afraid of him, as he could be one of their kids.

"The song 'White America' is playing on irony, and everything that everybody's ever said about me, rolled into one song," he said. "And whether I agree with it or not, I'm saying that it's all true."

But when it's all said and done, Marshall says he really isn't everything they say he is. He's not that bad of a guy. After all, would a dastardly villain invite the world to trip the light fantastic with him?

"The whole point of the song 'Square Dance' was like, 'F— everything that was going on in the world right now and square dance with me,' " he explained. "It's a ridiculous thing to do, like to picture a bunch of people square dancing. But I'm just saying, 'Do it while you can, 'cause you don't know what's gonna happen tomorrow. Have a good time, enjoy everything and seize this moment, 'cause tomorrow it could be something completely different.' "

For a full-length feature interview with Eminem, check out [article id="1454585"]"Eminem: The Gift And The Curse"[/article].

—Shaheem Reid, with additional reporting by Sway Calloway